

This Week in Congress

November 20, 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I returned to Washington, D.C., this week for votes in the House. On Wednesday, the House unanimously passed a resolution to fund federal government agencies and programs through December 8, 2006. This gives Congress more time to reach an agreement on the annual spending bills that will fund the federal government through September 30, 2007. As we approach Thanksgiving, I want to wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday. I am always grateful for the opportunity to represent you in our nation's capital. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Accepting Health Care Award during the Kansas Hospital Association Convention

I attended the Kansas Hospital Association's (KHA) 2006 Annual Convention and Trade Show this week in Topeka to accept the KHA's Distinguished Health Care Advocate Award. The KHA

works tirelessly to promote hospitals in Kansas. I am honored to receive this award and would especially like to thank Susan Page, president and CEO of Pratt Regional Medical Center, and Jim Reagan, CEO of Morris County Hospital in Council Grove, for nominating me.

At the convention, I spoke about the outlook for health care policy in 2007. I enjoyed visiting with hospital administrators and medical personnel from across the state and hearing their concerns about the future. A special thank you to Tom Bell, KHA President, for organizing this conference. I would also like to congratulate Rita Buurman, CEO of Sabetha Community Hospital, for being awarded the 2006 Charles S. Billings Award for her dedication and commitment to the health care industry.

Meeting with our Future Military Leaders

The 2006 First District Service Academy Selection Board met this weekend at Fort Riley to interview students applying for admission to the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. The opportunity to meet with these bright young men and women as they apply to become the next leaders in our military is one of my favorite responsibilities as a Member of Congress.

This important process would not be possible without the help of my selection board, which is made of community leaders from across the state who take a great interest in seeing our students succeed. The members review applications and conduct interviews before making

recommendations to me. This year's board members included Jesse Bernal and Jean Clifford of Garden City, Scott Carter of Herington, Glennys Doane of Downs, Steve Harmon and Ron Whitney of Emporia, Dr. Kate Lehner and Sam Robinson of Junction City, Ron Lucas of Goodland, Lori Rayl of Hutchinson, Paula Ripple of Dodge City, Gwen Trost of Concordia, Tobias Wood of Stockton, and Dr. Mace Braxton, Lucille Coverdale and Mike Junk of Salina.

Attending the Annual Meeting of Kansas Farm Bureau

Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) members gathered in Manhattan this week for the 88th annual KFB meeting. I joined members representing each of the state's 105 counties on Saturday to talk about current agriculture issues, including disaster assistance, the 2007 Farm Bill, trade and renewable energy. I always appreciate the opportunity to meet with Kansas Farm Bureau members, whether it be in Kansas or Washington, D.C., as members work to keep me informed of issues important to our Kansas farmers and ranchers.

Visiting about Agriculture with National Farm Broadcasters

En route home from Washington, D.C., I stopped in Kansas City to attend the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB) convention. This annual meeting brings together farm broadcasters from across the United States with industry leaders to discuss issues of the day. I enjoyed visiting with the broadcasters about the agriculture climate in our nation's capital. I appreciated the opportunity to join them at the meeting and for their continued support of the

agriculture industry and our farmers and ranchers.

Remembering Bill Meyer of Marion

Bill Meyer, a respected leader and a friend, of Marion passed away on Tuesday. A legend in Kansas journalism, Bill was the longtime editor and publisher of the Marion County Record. During his 55 years of service to this community paper, Bill did not stop at just reporting the news. His active role in civil issues, including the construction of Marion Reservoir and the local football stadium, helped create good news for the city of Marion.

Before his time in Marion, Bill served his country in World War II and later received his bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Kansas. His contributions to his family, profession, community and country are deserving of respect, admiration and gratitude. Bill will be missed throughout Kansas. My family's prayers are with his wife, Joan, and the rest of the Meyer family during this difficult time.

Visiting Kansas Communities

Topeka: I made stops in Topeka this week to visit the Risk Management Agency (RMA) Regional Office and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI). At RMA, I visited with Director Rebecca Davis and Deputy Director Mary Linch about the role and responsibilities of the Regional Office. At KBI, I appreciated spending time with Director Larry Welch to discuss activities at the KBI and the ongoing issue of methamphetamine labs in Kansas.

In the Office

Sister Therese Bangert of Kansas City was in the office this week to discuss the food stamp program. Dr. Bruce Douglas, Dr. Mark Sarver, Al Massoni and J.R. Kirkland of Sterling were in with Sterling College to describe distance education efforts and new projects in the development phase. Ellen Hansen of Emporia stopped by to talk about improving our nation's immigration system.

Mike Michaelis of Hays was in with the Ellis County Coalition for Economic Development to discuss various economic development projects in Ellis County. Kimberly Gencur of Topeka and her fiancé, Kansas Representative Josh Svaty of Ellsworth, were in the office this week. Kimberly was in to talk about ITC's potential projects in Kansas. ITC is in the business of constructing and operating electrical transmission lines.

Alora Mayer and Christine Riffel of Topeka visited my Washington, D.C., office this week for a tour of the U.S. Capitol.